



ROSA MUNDI

WHEN JEAN, GREGG, RON, AND I MET in Ron's dining room at Garden Valley Ranch to plan this publication, first up on our agenda was what to call it. How were we going to come up with a name that would symbolize the mission of the Heritage Rose Foundation? After several ideas were floated, Ron laconically proposed Rosa Mundi, which we all immediately loved and which the HRF Board subsequently approved.

Perhaps the best known of the striped roses, Rosa Mundi is romantic and appealing with its striking white flowers splashed with crimson and striped with pale pink and large bosses of yellow stamens. A sport from *Rosa gallica officinalis*, it is easy to grow and has few prickles and good foliage. Graham Stuart Thomas described it as "the most vivid of the striped roses" and wrote that it "cannot fail to arrest attention wherever it is planted." In his opinion, it and its parent, *R. gallica officinalis*, were "two of the most valuable hardy flowering shrubs for brilliant effect that are available for general planting today."

Once named *R. gallica* Variegata, and now also known as *R. gallica* Versicolor because it can revert at random to an all-red state, Rosa Mundi was first described in 1583. According to *The Garden Book* of Sir Thomas Hanmer, published in England in 1659, it was first found in Norfolk, England "upon a branch of the common red rose." Legend, however, has it that Rosa Mundi was named after Fair Rosamund, a mistress of Henry II, England's monarch from 1154 to 1189. In *The Book of Old Roses*, Trevor Griffiths tells the story of their tragic affair. Henry was forced to marry a princess who, brooking no competition, is said to have murdered the lovely Rosamund. By Henry's order, Rosamund was buried at Godstow Nunnery near Oxford, England, and each year on the anniversary of her death, he ordered her tomb to be decorated with masses of Rosa Mundi.

What's in a name? A rose journal by any other name would be as sweet (apologies to Shakespeare), but as the HRF enters its 20th year of working to preserve our rose heritage, we are thrilled to be publishing under the banner of the venerable and beautiful Rosa Mundi.

—Virginia Kean, Editor

Bibliography

The Graham Stuart Thomas Rose Book, Enlarged and Thoroughly Revised, Sagapress, Timber Press (1994), p. 37.

The Book of Old Roses, Trevor Griffiths (Mermaid Books, 1983), pp. 43.

Roses from the Archives of the Royal Horticultural Society, Peter Harkness (Henry N. Abrams, Inc., 2005).